



Centre for Information & Community Services of Ontario



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United Way Member Agency

CICS Serving the Community Since 1968

We Serve for a Better Future

Highlights from 2010

Several years of hard work and community support culminated in the officially inauguration of the Immigrant Resource Centre on June 18, 2010. The celebration with community supporters as well as elected officials of all three levels of government was a memorable occasion.



IRC Official Opening

The Markham South Welcome Centre (MSWC) was born as part of a new vision of providing settlement services in an all-in-one centre. This centre is part of a welcome centre system with five locations in York Region funded by CIC, which provides one-stop settlement services for newcomers along with four principal partner agencies.



Official Opening of MSWC, September 17 [left to right: June Lee (CICS Vice President), Fina Ching (CICS Treasurer), David Pao(CICS Board President), Guest, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Moy Wong-Tam (Executive Director), MP Paul Callandra, Albrey Yeung (CICS Board Director), Yonnie Chung (Board Director), Susan Go (Board Director), Samuel Luk (CICS Secretary), Sean Hu (Board Director).

The agency also started a series of Immigrant Salons showcasing immigrant talent in drama, arts, music as well as educational seminars relating to areas of health and settlement.

Honorary Patrons & Board of Directors



Front Row (Left to Right): Albrey Yeung, Linda Tam, Yonnie Chung, Moy Wong-Tam (Executive Director), Fina Ching, Susan Go, Connie Lau
Back Row (Left to Right): Ernest Cheung, Gautam Sharma, David Pao (President), Steven Yu, Dr. Thomas Li, Samuel Luk, Raphael Lai, Sean Hu

Honorary Patrons:

The Hon. Vivienne Poy, Senator
 Mr. Hin Cheung Tam, Order of Ontario

President:

Mr. David Pao

Vice President:

Ms. June Lee

Treasurer:

Ms. Fina Ching

Secretary:

Dr. Thomas Li

Directors:

Mr. Ernest Cheung
 Ms. Yonnie Chung
 Mrs. Susan Go
 Mr. Sean Hu
 Mr. Raphael Lai
 Mrs. Connie Lau
 Mr. Samuel Luk
 Mr. Gautam Sharma
 Ms. Linda Tam
 Ms. Albrey Yeung
 Mr. Steven Yu
 Mr. Alan Ho

Immediate Past President



MESSAGE From the President and Executive Director



The past year was one of watershed events for CICS and major changes in the settlement sector. CICS started off the year with an intense period of construction at 7220 Kennedy Road that yielded a marvelous and concrete outcome- Markham South Welcome centre. This was the fruition of several years of planning of many stakeholders in York Region including our four principal partners, with the funding of Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC), and valuable input from CIC-York region staff. Modeled on the concept of bringing various services required by immigrants under one roof, the welcome centre service delivery model is unique in that multiple service providers share marketing resource and a case management system. CICS is proud to be one of the five agencies in implementing this exciting model, and lead in providing specialized settlement services to women, youth and seniors in the welcome centre system.

The presence of five welcome centres in York Region means that newcomers can access services through one common website or telephone number, and can expect certain core services and a consistent service standard. Furthermore, staff members from different agencies work as a team under a matrix management so that newcomers' experience of the services is seamless. After the four new welcome centres were officially launched in September, additional partner agencies have been brought in to enrich the repertoire of services. The number of immigrants living in York Region grew 34% between 2001 and 2006, therefore the creation of the welcome centres has been timely in meeting their settlement needs.

With the unwavering support of community volunteers and sponsors, Phase II of Immigrant Resource Centre (IRC) renovation was finally completed and the IRC was officially inaugurated with fanfare in June. Since then we have been able to accommodate more community events as well as start a youth drop-in program. An increasing number of youth has been using the spacious gym to release their tension after school, engage in creative arts and crafts, and do some simple cooking. A notable community event we hosted was an all-candidate mayoral debate last fall in our multi-purpose hall to a crowd of over 200, giving immigrants a raised level of awareness about community issues and a sense of connectedness to a key civic activity, which forms part and parcel of their integration.

The "modernized approach" and the subsequent funding reduction of CIC announced at the end of December had a reverberating impact on the settlement sector in Ontario, and CICS was not exempt from its effects. However, CICS has developed resiliency through its 43 years of history. The management and staff together developed an "outcome-based approach" over the past year, and the agency will continue to sharpen it for all its services. We will re-assess our environment and priorities, and continue to keep abreast of changing community needs, re-prioritize, and re-tool to meet those needs. At the same time, we plan to fully capitalize on our asset, the IRC, to enhance our youth and community programming in the coming years. Nevertheless, our biggest asset lies in the expertise, experience, and dedication of our staff and board directors, therefore we will rally to enhance current services and explore new frontiers of service.

Mr. David Pao
President

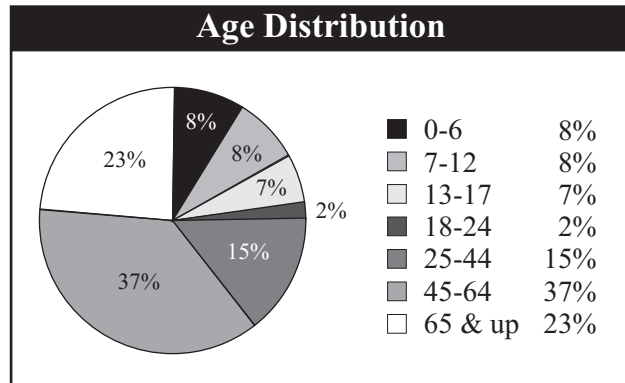
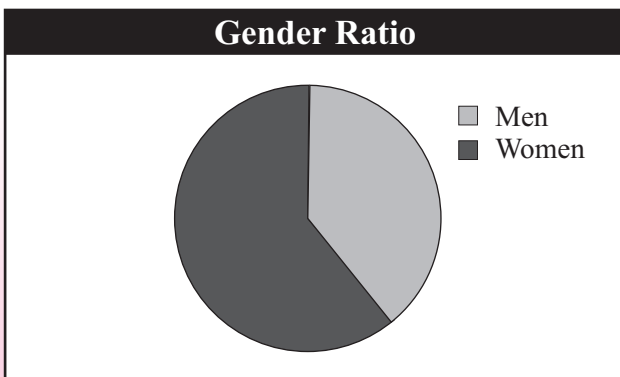
Ms. Moy Wong-Tam
Executive Director

Community Services

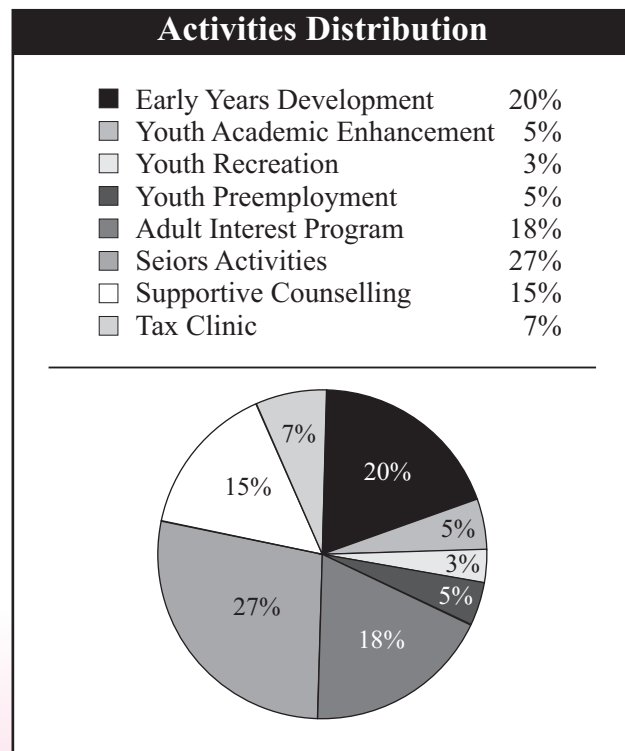
Within the Community Services Unit, we serve people from all walks of life, providing them with various types of individual contacts and group activities, be they individual counselling, educational workshops, community information sessions, recreational programs, skills training, or specific assistance. All of these professional interactions are aimed at helping individual citizens and immigrants engage with the community, be informed of their individual rights and responsibilities as well wider community issues, and to live a healthy and meaningful life in the community.



Over the course of 2010, we served more than 6,000 new and returning clients; of whom 36% are men and 64% are women.



In terms of the age distribution among the clients we serve within the Community Services Unit, half of our clients are between the age of 45 and 64, 23% are seniors who are 65 and over, 9% are adults between the ages of 25 and 44, 9% are youths between the ages of 13 and 24, and 9% are children between the ages of 0 and 12.



In addition, within our clientele, most are interested in our senior activities, adult interest programs and supportive counselling; the rest have participated in programs related to tax clinic, youth pre-employment, youth recreation, youth academic enhancement program, and early years development.



Success stories in Community Services:

“I signed up for CICS’ Seniors Fitness Activities with my 83 year-old mom. She was shy, introverted, weak, and sometimes walked with difficulties; therefore, she always refrained from social activities. ...[I]t was my hope that my mom would come out of isolation and loneliness. After the first session, to my astonishment, mom told me she liked it and wanted to go again. ... with the support and encouragement from other participants, my mom for the first time tried the Wii Sports game. ...Initially, she was very nervous and confused but after some practice she got a high score! She was so thrilled and everyone in the room shared her happiness. ...She no longer refused to go out, she became livelier, energetic, and regained appetite.”



“Calvin is a high school student who prefers doing things hands-on. As an immigrant from China, ...even though he may not be the top performer in school, he has always been responsible and diligent with his school work. ...he works a part time job in a Japanese restaurant. ...As much as he enjoyed his work there, he’s feeling dissatisfied with being underpaid. ...Through his high school friends’ referral, he attended LIFT, wanting to learn more about how he can switch to a different job. ...he got inspired [and] recognized the importance of establishing a more solid social network. The program has reshaped his trend of thought. He now feels that he has a better understanding of what he would like to do, not only just switching to a different job but paving his way for a future career.”

“The [Parent Smart & Student Smart] course helps me manage and resolve my child’s problems more effectively. It helps parents to develop good and on-going communication with our children and better understanding of their physical and mental developmental needs. ...Through the classes, I learn how to make food that children like. I also learn... how to prepare [my child] to [begin] school, manage stress and many other eye opening experiences [such as] sex education, [which] I don’t know how to teach my child. ...But through these lessons, I know how to deal with it, ...I have learned new principles and skills to help me guide my child in the future. ...This course includes a separate training for my child, aiming at fostering my child’s independency, self-help, social, language, and other learning skills. ...Before attending this course, ...she wouldn’t allow me to walk an inch away from her, which also frustrated me. ...After one week, my child can separate from me easily and go to the class by herself to play with her classmates without fear.”





The theme for this year's March Break Camp was teamwork and everyday in the Grades 1-2 classroom we would talk about how we need to help each other so that the whole class can win. Each day they would come up with thoughtful answers during the Life Skills session, but it was always hard for them to practice their good suggestions [and] ...make a positive difference. ...One little boy [in the camp] had autism. The other little boy ...had ADHD. The children had a hard time with [them], partly because they didn't understand why they were not following the rules like the rest. One day [there] was the perfect time to have an in-the-moment talk. ...We started to brainstorm ways when [one of "the boys"] re-entered the room [and] said he didn't want to go downstairs. ...Dennis raised his hand [and] said, "Oh! I think I can help V learn to be nice." ...Dennis was downstairs using all kinds of gym equipment to make up scenarios to show V what to do if he wants something. It was brilliant and I could see that V was really getting it! Over the remaining days, the kids came around and even thought of ways to help and include V. V's stress calmed and had a better time playing with the other kids."

Immigrant Youth Centre

Since its inception in 2009 in Markham, York Region, the IYC has reached many individual immigrant youths, including hundreds who come for individual support and thousands that we outreached and participated in our group activities.

Immigrant youths' lives are challenging: having to quickly adapt to the new educational system, making new friends, integrating in new culture(s), coping

with parents' frustration and expectations, and forming a more concrete self-identity during their development stage. CICS provides them with a positive and safe environment in which to overcome all these challenges.



In the year 2010, our clientele reflects a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds including a majority of Chinese youth from China, Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan (i.e. 74%), and the rest from South Asia, Middle East and other countries.

In terms of the gender ratio of clients that we served, we see a difference of less than 1% between young men and women. And as an Immigrant Youth Centre, the age range of our clients is between 13 and 24, with some exceptions when we also provide some information and referral services to the client's parents and siblings. Hence, as indicated in the pie chart below, 97% of our clientele in 2010 falls into that age bracket.

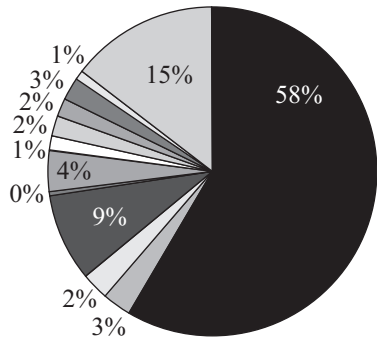
In the year of 2011-2012, IYC will continue to fulfill our mission by providing assistance to immigrant youths' integration into the community, enhance their personal wellbeing in the process of their transitions in life, in terms of both the settlement and development aspects, and create a safe and supportive environment for the youths to develop and live their potentials to the fullness.



2010

Countries of Origin

■ China	58%
■ Hong Kong	3%
■ India	2%
■ Iran	9%
■ Iraq	0%
■ Korea	4%
■ Pakistan	1%
■ Russian	2%
■ Sri Lanka	2%
■ Taiwan	3%
■ Vietnam	1%
■ Others	15%



Age Range

